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ABSTRACT

A recent analysis of the relationship between perceived parental rearing style (PRS) and depression and anxiety concluded that offspring's perceptions of their relationships with their parents are related to their own depression. Perceptions of socialization in the family of origin have been broadened from perceived PRS to aspects of the family system. This study examined the following hypotheses: (1) perceived PRS is significantly related to depression; (2) perceptions of family environment are significantly related to depression in offspring; (3) perceptions of socialization in the family of origin are significantly related to personality traits which might be antecedents of depression; (4) introversion does not provide the bridge between perceptions of socialization on the one hand and depression and personality characteristics on the other hand; and (5) the state-specificity hypothesis provides an explanation for the relation between perceptions of socialization and personality characteristics. Subjects were 186 university undergraduates. Socialization, construed as PRS, and the family environment was assessed by the Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory and the Family Environment Scale. The personality traits of self-esteem and self-efficacy were assessed by the Self-Esteem Inventory and the Self-Efficacy Scale; and depression by the Beck Inventory. The correlations between perceived socialization on the one hand and personality traits and depression on the other remained essentially unchanged when introversion and current depression were controlled statistically. (LLL)

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The Relation Between Perceptions of Parental Rearing Style And Family Climate, Personality Characteristics, and Depression In University Students

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Abstract

Examined the relation between perceived family socialization, personality traits, and depression in 186 university undergraduates. Socialization, construed as Parental Rearing Style (PRS) and the family environment, was assessed by the Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory and the Family Environment Scale. The personality traits of self-esteem and self-efficacy were assessed by the Self-Esteem Inventory and the Self-Efficacy Scale; depression, by the Beck Inventory. The canonical correlation (.53, **p** = .00) between perceived socialization on the one hand and personality traits and depression on the other remained essentially unchanged when introversion and current depression were controlled statistically.

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The Relation Between Perceptions of Parental Rearing Style And Family Climate, Personality Characteristics, and Depression In University Students

A recent meta-analysis of the relation between perceived parental rearing style (PRS) and depression and anxiety (Gerlsma, Emmelkamp, & Arrindell, 1990) concluded that offspring's perceptions of their relationships with their parents are related to their own depression. Gerlsma and colleagues qualified their conclusion, however, with the observation that compared to the results concerning perceived PRS and anxiety disorders, "Results of [PRS] on depressed patients were less consistent" (1990, p. 267)." The first purpose of the present study was to test the hypothesis that perceived PRS is significantly related to depression.

Two dimensions of PRS are relevant to depression: acceptance-rejection or affection/care; and autonomy vs. psychological control or control (Parker, 1983; Schaefer, 1965). Parker (1983) termed the unfavorable pattern of PRS recalled by depressed offspring "affectionless control". We will call the two major dimensions of PRS "acceptance" and "autonomy".

Recently, investigations of perceptions of socialization in the family of origin have been broadened from perceived PRS to aspects of the family system (cf. Blatt, Wein, Chevron, & Quinlan, 1979; McCranie & Bass, 1984; Oliver, Handal, Finn, & Herdy, 1987; Schwartz & Zuroff, 1979). The family environment is best summarized by the two dimensions of Cohesion vs. Conflict and Control, which map well into acceptance and autonomy (Fowler, 1982; Oliver, Handal, Enos, & May, 1988). Results relating perceptions of the family environment to depression have also been inconsistent (Bromet, 1984;

Oliver, Handal, Finn, & Herdy, 1987). A second purpose of the present study was to test the hypothesis that perceptions of the family environment are significantly related to depression in offspring.

Gerlsma and his co-workers attribute much of the inconsistency in findings concerning perceived PRS and depression in offspring to the nearly universally retrospective nature of offspring's reports of PRS. A third purpose of the present study was to assess concurrent rather than retrospective perceptions of PRS and the family environment by enrolling as subjects university undergraduates still in frequent contact with their family of origin.

Considerable recent interest focuses on personality traits which may predispose toward depression (Nietzel & Harris, 1990). The two personality traits of self-criticism and dependency have been examined most frequently. There has been very little investigation, however, of the origins of personality traits as antecedants of depression (cf Brook, Brook, Whiteman, & Gordon, 1983; Koestner, Zuroff, & Powers, in press). A third purpose of the present study was to test that hypothesis that perceptions of socialization in the family of origin are significantly related to personality traits which might be antecedants of depression. We chose self-esteem and self-efficacy on the basis of their conceptual relation to the two corresponding major dimensions of socialization, acceptance and autonomy.

Recent theoretical speculation (Barnett & Gotlib, 1988) and some empirical evidence (Akiskal, Hirschfeld, & Yeravian, 1983) suggest that among personality variables, the most frequent antecedant of depression may be introversion. However, the role of introversion in depression remains

controversial (Hirschfeld, Klerman, Lavori, Keller, Griffith, & Coryell, 1989; Parker, 1981). A fourth purpose of the present study was to test the hypothesis that introversion does not provide the bridge between perceptions of socialization on the one hand and depression and personality characteristics on the other hand. This purpose was achieved by controlling statistically for the effects of introversion.

Finally, the relation between perceptions of socialization in the family of origin and depression in offspring is frequently attributed to to their state of depression; it is presumed that negative perceptions revert to more positive perceptions when depression remits (the state-specificity hypothesis). Evidence regarding the state-specificity hypothesis as it pertains to perceptions of socialization fails to support it but is very limited. The last purpose of the present study was to test the state-specificity hypothesis as an explanation of the relation between perceptions of socialization and personality characteristics, also by controlling statistically for current depression.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 186 university undergraduates. These 121 females and 65 males had an average age of 19.5 years and spent an average of 23 hours per week with the family of origin.

Measures of Socialization

Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI): The 108-item version (Schluderman & Schluderman, 1970) of the CRPBI (Schaefer, 1965) was

selected to measure the two dimensions of PRS relevant to depression: Acceptance-Rejection and Autonomy vs. Psychological Control.

Family Environment Scale (FES): The FES (Moos & Moos, 1981), a broad-band measure of perceptions of the family environment, was factor-analyzed in a larger study (Paull, 1990). Factor scores on the two major dimensions of Cohesion and Control were used in this investigation.

Measures of Personality and Depression

Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI): Form C of the SEI (Coopersmith, 1967, 1981) was selected as a measure of global self-esteem.

Self-Efficacy Scale (SES): The SES (Tipton & Worthington, 1984a, 1984b) was selected as an index of generalized self-efficacy.

Beck Inventory (BI): The BI (Center for Cognitive Therapy, 1978) is a revised, copyright, validated version of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961).

Introversion Subscale of the Personality Research Form (PRF), Form E: The PRF-Form E (Jackson, 1974), a multitrait personality inventory, was also factor-analyzed in the larger study (Paull, 1990). Scores on the introversion-extroversion factor were used in this study.

Procedure

Subjects were recruited from large undergraduate classes and completed measures in their living quarters. The order of measures was counterbalanced.

Data Analysis

Scores were analyzed by means of canonical correlation. Socialization variables were used as the left-hand or predictor variables; personality characteristics and depression were used as the right-hand or criterion

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variables. Socialization variables consisted of the following five variables: Maternal Acceptance and Maternal Control as measured by the Mother form of the CRPBI; Paternal Acceptance and Paternal Control as measured by the Father form of the CRPBI; Cohesion as measured by the FES; and Control as measured by the FES. Personality characteristics and depression consisted of the following three variables: self-esteem as measured by the SEI; self-efficacy as measured by the SES; and depression as measured by the BI.

Three canonical correlations were conducted. The first utilized the scores without statistical control for any variable. The second correlation exerted statistical control for introversion by partialing out variance attributable to it. The third correlation omitted depression from the right-hand set of variables and exerted statistical control for it by partialing out variance attributable to it.

Results

Results of the three canonical correlations are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Table 1 displays structural coefficients, representing correlations between the variables and the canonical variate extracted. Tables 2 and 3 display standardized coefficients which, because they are not correlation coefficients, may take values > 1.

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Insert Tables 1, 2, and 3 about here

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Results of the three canonical correlations were strikingly similar in both magnitude and form. Concerning magnitude, in each case, a positive, significant, and moderate relation between socialization on the one hand and

personality variables and/or depression emerged. The three canonical correlations were .53, .54, and .50, **p**'s = .00, .000, and .00, respectively. According to the Stewart-Love redundancy indexes, the proportions of the variance in personality characteristics and/or depression accounted for were 12.9%, 10.2%, and 8.9%, respectively.

Concerning form, a single canonical variate was extracted in each case. In regard to socialization, and in order of prominence, the variate reflects high maternal acceptance, familial cohesion, and paternal acceptance, and a lack of parental control, both maternal and paternal. In regard to personality and/or depression, the variate reflects predominantly self-esteem, which accounts for nearly all of the variance and, to a lesser extent, self-efficacy and (non)depression. Thus parental acceptance, familial cohesion, and a lack of parental control are related primarily to positive self-esteem, but also to self-efficacy and the absence of depression. The major difference between the three canonical correlations emerges between the first equation on the one hand and the second and third equations on the other, in which statistical control for introversion and depression eliminates the relation with self-efficacy. This result suggests that the relation between perceptions of socialization and self-efficacy may be moderated by introversion and/or depression.

Discussion

Results of this investigation of perceived socialization, personality variables, and depression support all four hypotheses. Briefly, these results join that portion of literature summarized by Gerlsma et al. (1990) which finds a positive relation between perceived PRS and depression. They extend

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this literature past perceived PRS to include perceived family climate. They rectify a methodological limitation of previous studies because they are based on concurrent as distinct from retrospective reports. They provide evidence insubstantiating two third variables which could provide the basis for rival hypotheses, namely introversion as a moderator and the state-specificity hypothesis.

Four major considerations qualify the results of this study. The first two considerations arise from the fact that depression was measured only by a symptom-dimensional scale. First, results cannot be generalized to diagnoses of depression. Second, some evidence suggests considerable overlap between depression on the one hand and general distress (Gotlib, 1984) and anxiety on the other. These results might therefore not be specific to depression, but might be general to anxiety and/or distress, or be mediated by them. However, recent evidence suggests that when anxiety is measured by an instrument designed to be specific to anxiety (the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; Spielberger, 1983), the overlap between depression and anxiety in this population is only mild (Oliver & Novak, 1990). Results of the present study may therefore indeed be specific to depression. The third consideration is that, because the study is correlational in design, it cannot establish that socialization precedes personality characteristics and/or depression. The fourth consideration is that the study was designed to measure offspring's perceptions of their socialization, and was not addressed to socialization as it might be perceived or rated by others.

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Table 1

Structural Coefficients of Variables Measuring Socialization, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy As Determined by Canonical Correlation Analysis

Variable	Structural Coefficients Canonical Variate 1
First Set	
Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory	
Maternal Acceptance	.82
Maternal Psychological Control	-.64
Paternal Acceptance	.74
Paternal Psychological Control	-.65
Family Environment Scale	
Cohesion (Family)	.81
Control (Family)	-.08
Second Set	
Self-Esteem Inventory	.96
Self-Efficacy Scale	.51
Beck Inventory	-.42

For Root No. 1, canonical correlation = .53, $p = .00$.
Stewart-Love Redundancy Index for the first canonical correlation = 12.9%.
Structural coefficients are the correlations between the individual variables and their associated canonical variates.

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Table 2

Structural Coefficients of Variables Measuring Socialization, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy As Determined by Canonical Correlation Analysis Controlling for Introversion

Variable	~~Structural~~ Standardized Coefficients Canonical Variate 1
First Set	
Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory	
Maternal Acceptance	.37
Maternal Psychological Control	-.21
Paternal Acceptance	.26
Paternal Psychological Control	-.19
Family Environment Scale	
Cohesion (Family)	.30
Control (Family)	-.01
Second Set	
Self-Esteem Inventory	1.24
Self-Efficacy Scale	-.06
Beck Inventory	.38

For Root No. 1, canonical correlation = .54, **p** = .00.
Stewart-Love Redundancy Index for the first canonical correlation = %.

Table 3

Structural Coefficients of Variables Measuring Socialization, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy As Determined by Canonical Correlation Analysis Controlling for Depression

Variable	~~Structural~~ Standardized Coefficients Canonical Variate 1
First Set	
Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory	
Maternal Acceptance	.36
Maternal Psychological Control	-.16
Paternal Acceptance	.39
Paternal Psychological Control	-.15
Family Environment Scale	
Cohesion (Family)	.27
Control (Family)	.03
Second Set	
Self-Esteem Inventory	1.02
Self-Efficacy Scale	-.04

For Root No. 1, canonical correlation = .50, **p** = .00.
Stewart-Love Redundancy Index for the first canonical correlation = %.

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